



## *Parshas Shoftim 2023, King in the Field*

*The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Ruchma Leah Bas Sarah And loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.*

Our Parsha outlines the leadership structure for the Jewish nation. We begin with the commandant of appointing judges and law officers to maintain peace and order in each city. Moshe then details specific laws for judges against corruption and perversion of justice. As the Pasuk says (16:20) "**Tzedek Tzedek tirdof - You shall surely pursue justice.**"

Moshe continues and gives over regulations for kings, such as not having many wives or acquiring excessive wealth. He relates why Kohanim will not inherit any portions of Israel, for G-d is their inheritance. Although they were scheduled by family to work in the Beis Hamikdash, a Kohen always has the right to offer his sacrifices personally.

Moshe expounds upon the prohibition of engaging in witchcraft and offers guidance on discerning between genuine and false Prophets, along with the penalties for falsely claiming divine communication.

However, a question comes to mind: Moshe explains the legal process for matters or issues that regular Jewish courts can't answer. (17:8) "if a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, assault or dispute in the court, you shall get up and go to the place that the Lord your G-d has chosen." What specific location does Moshe Rabbeinu allude to? Why doesn't he explicitly mention it?!

Furthermore, why does he use the words "וַקַּמְתָּ וְעָלִיתָ" —your shall get up and go," rather than "go to the place that G-d has chosen"?!

Rashi, Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading Torah commentary answers this question with a simple explanation. He writes that Moshe refers to G-d's chosen place, the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash, where the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court resided.

In Moshe's era, the Sanhedrin convened at the entrance of the Mishkan, and they continued there until the construction of the Beis Hamikdash. After its establishment, the Sanhedrin occupied a dedicated chamber within the Beis Hamikdash's courtyard, known as the "לשכת הגזית - Lishkas HaGazis," the Chamber of Hewn Stone.

The Mishkan stood at the center of the desert formation, while the Beis Hamikdash was situated upon a mountain. Hence, Moshe employs the phrase "you shall get up and go," signifying the journey required to seek clarity and resolutions for contentious matters.

However, the Alshich Hakadosh, Rav Moshe Alshich, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that Moshe Rabbeinu does not specify the "place that G-d has chosen," for it is not just a physical location but an internal journey.

Moshe is preparing the nation for times such as our current reality, where no Sanhedrin or Beis Hamikdash and society challenge the concept of G-d's sovereignty over our world. When conventional wisdom discredits our identity and calls into question the purpose of our existence.

The Alshich Hakodesh explains that Moshe did not specify a physical location because we can connect with G-d and get the answers we seek even during exile. The Alshich himself lived long after the second Beis Hamikdash in the early 1500s and was a student of the holy Rav Yosef Caro, the author of the Shulchan Aruch.

The method, according to the Alshich, to resolve the complex issues we face is "וַקַּמְתָּ וְעָלִיתָ - *your shall get up and go.*" We must abandon the exile mentality and attitude and rise up to the level of internal redemption.

We should exist with the conviction that G-d is guiding us to places we go to make this world a home for Him once again.

This lesson is ever more relevant as we enter the month of Elul and begin to prepare for Rosh Hashanah and the new year. According to Chassidus, the king is in the field during Elul as we prepare for the high holidays.

The metaphor paints the picture that a king is usually secluded in his palace, surrounded by guards within his regal chamber, limiting his accessibility to the people. But this month, the king leaves his magnificent palace and goes to the field to see his people. The entourage, the formidable walls, the grand throne, and the royal guards are absent. Only the king and his people.

The idea behind this metaphor is that during Elul, G-d's divine presence is more accessible and approachable. But we, too, must leave the city to see the king; we must let go of limitations and barriers for the chance to grow and develop our connection with our Creator and Father in heaven. The journey begins with authenticity, humility and vulnerability, leaving the familiar behind to be close to the king once again!

In our daily life, it is imperative we understand that to create meaningful and lasting relationships, we must step out of our comfort zone and share our true and authentic selves. We need to let go of the mask we hid behind to develop a real and enduring connection that will stand the test of time.

**"Believing and doing are part of a single continuum, and both are a measure of a living relationship characterized by loyalty."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*